INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO: 31 POLICY CODE: ILBB

TO: Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Curriculum Coordinators, Elementary and Middle School Principals, and Special Education Directors

FROM: Susan A. Gendron, Commissioner of Education

DATE: October 20, 2008

RE: Changes to the Maine Educational Assessment at Grades 3-8

Due to budgetary considerations, several changes to the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) will occur in March 2009:

- Writing will not be assessed at grades 5 and 8 in either the standard MEA or the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP).
- Computer-based assessment, the MEA online, will not occur at grade 8.

We have also proposed a significant change to our Maine Educational Assessment program, beginning next school year (2009-2010), that would generate substantial savings. This proposal would have us join other New England states (NH, VT, and RI) in delivering a common assessment to grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics in the fall of 2009 and science in the spring of 2010; this would replace the March 2010 MEA. This assessment is known as the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). The NECAP will also include a writing assessment which will be field-tested in the fall of 2009. We will continue to administer the SAT as part of the Maine High School Assessment.

We will make a final decision on use of the NECAP in the near future and will provide additional information as soon as possible. An Informational Letter will be sent soon with more information about the March 2009 MEA administration. We will provide additional information as plans develop for the 2009-2010 school year assessment.

If you have questions, please contact Wanda Monthey at 207-624-6831 or wanda.monthey@maine.gov.

Note: The Administrative and Informational Letters (with more formatting for ease of reading and printing) are available on our website at the following address: http://www.maine.gov/education/edletrs/index.shtml